



CONFLICT MITIGATION

Serbian Orthodox Monastery champions water project for Kosovo Albanian community

On November 17th, representatives from the Visoki Decani Serbian Orthodox Monastery and the neighboring Kosovo Albanian village of Isniq/Istnic celebrated completion of an irrigation project for the residents of Isniq/Istnic. The cooperation is unique considering ongoing tension between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, even ten years after the violent conflict.

The project, funded by USAID and Norwegian Church Aid, was led by the Monastery's Abbot, Bishop Teodosije Sibalic. Isniq/Istnic residents sought the Monastery's help in building an irrigation water project to the village's farms from a source on the Monastery's grounds. Seeing an opportunity to improve relations between the Monastery and its Kosovo Albanian neighbors, the Bishop requested funding from the international community.



Bishop Teodosije Sibalic, Deqan/Decani Monastery's Abbot, at the ribbon-cutting ceremony along with Rame Bala, Isniq/Istnic community representative

USAID granted \$27,341 to a local NGO, Community Development Foundation (CDF), which also received 45,000 euros from the Monastery, funds donated to them by Norwegian Church Aid. The irrigation system conveys water from a source inside the Special Protective Zone surrounding the Monastery, established to protect this UNESCO World Heritage Site, to farmland in Isniq/Istnic. The project, including the path for the conveyance system, was finalized after two years of discussion among Monastery staff, local residents, and UNMIK.

USAID's involvement started in late April 2008, with construction finishing six months later in October. This cooperative effort, and outreach by a Serbian Orthodox Monastery, is a historic first for Kosovo since the conflict.

50-Year-Old School Renovated by USAID in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica

The "Ismail Qemali" school rehabilitation project, the last of five USAID-funded small infrastructure projects in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica this year, was dedicated on November 19th. Patricia Rader, USAID/Kosovo Director, and Bajram Rexhepi, Mayor of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, joined the community and school in a ceremony at the school.

The school, one of the biggest in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, has 890 students in grades 1-9. The building had not been refurbished in the fifty years since it was built, which made its renovation a priority for the community and local government.

USAID, through the Community Enhancement and Development Program, invested \$201,518 in the refurbishment, which included replacing doors and windows to reduce energy losses, painting, replacing floors, repairing the roof, and the complete renovation of indoor bathrooms. The project also included repair of the central heating system and installation of new radiators, refurbishment of the school gym, and provision of 6 new blackboards to replace the damaged ones.

The Municipality provided all the tiles for the roof repair, as well as new desks and chairs for the students.

The Community Enhancement and Development Program, implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration, helps improve living conditions in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Zubin Potok and Gracanica through small infrastructure upgrades. Project identification and selection is achieved through a process of close engagement and consultation with municipal and community leaders.

ACCESS TO WATER

Small Infrastructure for Water and Sanitation Program kicks off

On November 10th, Ms. Patricia Rader, Director of the USAID Mission in Kosovo, announced the beginning of the Small Infrastructure for Water and Sanitation Program.

This three-year program, implemented by International Relief and Development (IRD), will partner with Regional Water Companies initially in four municipalities: Pejë/Pec, Klinë/Klina, Glogoc/Glogovac and Malishevë/Malisevo.

"Kosovo has made progress in providing water supply to its citizens, consolidating the service into seven regional water companies and establishing a Water and Waste Regulatory Agency, but in spite of the progress made, much remains to be done. Only 73% of Kosovo's population has access to drinking water, far below rates in neighboring countries," said Ms. Rader in her speech. She continued, "we hope that we will reach 85,000 Kosovo citizens with improved access to safe water supply and sanitation services."

Ms. Rader was joined by Daniel Floer, IRD Board Member, and Ahmet Shala, Minister of Finance and Economy, to greet the guests.

The Small Infrastructure for Water and Sanitation Program is designed to work with local government authorities, Regional Water Companies, and the Association of Regional Water Companies (SHUKOS) to improve access to safe water supply for the residents of these municipalities. The Small Infrastructure for Water and Sanitation Program, in addition to its \$5 million, aims to mobilize from municipalities and communities a total of \$3.1 million.

The program will be implemented in partnership with the Community Development Fund (CDF), a local, non-profit NGO. The partnership is part of USAID's assistance to strengthen and expand infrastructure services to communities across Kosovo.

LEGAL EDUCATION

Newly updated and institutionalized courses with 137 students begin in the Law Faculty of University of Prishtina

Two new courses together with legal clinics and a series of seminars will be taught as part of the 2008/09 winter semester, with 137 law students attending.

The University of Prishtina Faculty of Law has introduced for the first time, the Legal Methodology course and the Legal Ethics & Professional Responsibility course as mandatory classes in the curriculum for third-year law students.

The syllabus and materials for each course have been initially developed, reviewed, and revised by ABA Legal Education Specialist, Professor Emeritus John (Jack) Van Doren.

Professor Van Doren will co-teach the courses along with local professors. Additionally, the Simulation Legal Clinic, the Civil Legal Clinic and the Criminal Legal Clinic, initially introduced in 2005 as pilot courses, have successfully continued this year as part of the syllabus with 61 students attending. The clinics will be institutionalized next academic year.

This reform is part of the improvements that the Law Faculty is undergoing in accordance with the European-based legal education standards for enhancing the curricula and teaching methodologies; preparing for the accreditation process; and for giving students the skills they need to serve effectively in an independent and developed legal profession.

Law curriculum reform is part of the Legal Profession Development Initiative supported by USAID and implemented by the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative.

LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING

USAID supports multi-party constituency offices

The first multi-party constituency office in Pristina opened with support from USAID's Political Party and Legislative Strengthening Initiative, implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

NDI has worked with political parties to help them become more accessible to citizens, through advice on how to open and manage a constituency office, but this is the first time that it funded the establishment of multi-party constituency offices.

"Despite the limitations of Kosovo's single district system, and despite limited resources, MPs have recognized the need to reach out to constituents and have previously -- on their own -- opened constituency offices," said Patricia Rader, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director. "I would like to congratulate MPs on their efforts to hear citizens' concerns and -- within the limits of their mandate and resources -- help them to address their needs."

Previously USAID, through NDI, provided technical assistance including advice, training and manuals to select Members of Parliament (MPs) during the last Assembly mandate to establish constituency offices throughout Kosovo including the first one which opened in Peja/Pec in November 2005. To-date nine (9) such offices have opened in throughout Kosovo.

U.S. Agency for International Development
Arbëria (Dragodan), Ismail Qemali st., nr. 1
Phone: ++ 381 38 243 673
Fax: ++ 381 38 249 493

For more information visit www.usaid.gov/missions/kosovo and <http://pristina.usembassy.gov/> or contact us at kosovousaidinfo@usaid.gov